1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
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were more closely associated with it. All our best informants —Yat, Kar, Kis, Mar, Mes, Gwiyap, and Mey—spoke pidgin English, and all were of the Mangwiyow lineage with the exception of Mes. They also acted as interpreters when those who spoke only Kwoma were questioned. Gwiyap, Mar, Mey, and Mes were hired as house and shoot boys so that they were virtually always around. This permitted a great deal of unobtrusive questioning and observation of their behavior.

A short statement of the social positions in which the Kwoma placed the investigators may be useful in order to indicate the direction of the biases and lacunae in the data. At first we did not fit into any of the simple categories into which they had divided Europeans. A summary of the history of Kwoma contact with whites will clarify what being white meant to them. The first contact was in 1913 when the Kwoma killed a police boy[24] connected with the Behrmann expedition, for raping one of their women. A Kwoma was shot in reprisal. From this time until the Australians brought them "under control" in 1928, the Kwoma had little contact with Europeans. Since then they have come only occasionally in touch with white recruiters, traders, missionaries, and Australian government officers.

According to their own retrospective accounts, the first conception which the Kwoma had of the whites was that they were unnatural beings. They called them *ngamba* (ghost), a word which is also used to refer to a person who commits some heinous crime. It corresponds roughly in meaning to the English words "inhuman," "monstrous," or "unnatural"; and it would appear that this feeling persists, to some extent, to the present day. After I had been living at Rumbima for about six months, I came back from bathing at the spring below Mar's house without bothering to put my shoes on. Awa and Kwiya were sitting under Mar's porch. I had become quite friendly with these two girls, as I had frequently gossiped and joked with them on my almost daily

[24] Natives trained by both the former German and present Australian territorial governments to act as constables under the orders of a white officer.